

FEASTS (Moedim): Chanukah Two: 2 Candles (Festival of Lights).

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Chanukah 2:

Numbers 7:18-29.

18 On the second day Nethanel the son of Zuar, prince of Issachar, gave his offering.
19 He offered for his offering: one silver platter, the weight of which was one hundred thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a meal offering;
20 one golden ladle of ten shekels, full of incense;
21 one young bull, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering;
22 one male goat for a sin offering;
23 and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two head of cattle, five rams, five male goats, five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Nethanel the son of Zuar.
24 On the third day Eliab the son of Helon, prince of the children of Zebulun
25 gave his offering: one silver platter, the weight of which was a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a meal offering;
26 one golden ladle of ten shekels, full of incense;
27 one young bull, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering;
28 one male goat for a sin offering;
29 and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two head of cattle, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Eliab the son of Helon.

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(1 Maccabees 5:1-68 NAB-A) :

. Wars with Neighboring Peoples. .

When the Gentiles round about heard that the altar had been rebuilt and the sanctuary consecrated as before, they were very angry. So they decided to destroy the descendants of Jacob who were among them, and they began to massacre and persecute the people. Then Judas attacked the sons of Esau at Akrabattene in Idumea, because they were blockading Israel; he defeated them heavily, overcame and despoiled them. He also remembered the malice of the sons of Baeon, who had become a snare and a stumbling block to the people by ambushing them along the roads. He forced them to take refuge in towers, which he besieged; he vowed their annihilation and burned down the towers along with all the persons in them. Then he crossed over to the Ammonites, where he found a strong army and a large body of people with Timothy as their leader. He fought many battles with them, routed them, and struck them down. After seizing Jazer and its villages, he returned to Judea.

. Liberation of Galilean Jews. .

The Gentiles in Gilead assembled to attack and destroy the Israelites who were in their territory; these then fled to the stronghold of Dathema. They sent a letter to Judas and his brothers saying: "The Gentiles around us have combined against us to destroy us, and they are preparing to come and seize this stronghold to which we have fled. Timothy is the leader of their army. Come at once and rescue us from them, for many of us have fallen. All our kinsmen who were among the Tobiads have been killed; the Gentiles have carried away their wives and children and their goods, and they have slain there about a thousand men." While they were reading this letter, suddenly other messengers, in torn clothes, arrived from Galilee to deliver a similar message: that the inhabitants of Ptolemais, Tyre, and Sidon, and the whole of Gentile Galilee had joined forces to destroy them. When Judas and the people heard this, a great assembly convened to consider what they should do for their unfortunate kinsmen who were being attacked by enemies. Judas said to his brother Simon: "Choose men for yourself, and go, rescue your kinsmen in Galilee; I and my brother Jonathan will go to Gilead." In Judea he left Joseph, son of Zechariah, and Azariah, leader of the people, with the rest of the army to guard it. "Take charge of these people," he commanded them, "but do not fight against the Gentiles until we return." Three thousand men were allotted to Simon, to go into Galilee, and eight thousand men to Judas, for Gilead. Simon went into Galilee and fought many battles with the Gentiles. They were crushed before him, and he pursued them to the very gate of Ptolemais. About three thousand men of the Gentiles fell, and he gathered their spoils. He took with him the Jews who were in Galilee and in Arbatta, with their wives and children and all that they had, and brought them to Judea with great rejoicing.

. Judas and Jonathan in Gilead. .

Judas Maccabeus and his brother Jonathan crossed the Jordan and marched for three days through the desert. There they met some Nabateans, who received them peacefully and told them all that had happened to the Jews in Gilead: "Many of them have been imprisoned in Bozrah, in Bosor near Alema, in Chaspho, Maked, and Carnaim"--all of these are large, fortified cities-- "and some have been imprisoned in other cities of Gilead. Tomorrow their enemies plan to attack the strongholds and to seize and destroy all these people in one day." Thereupon Judas suddenly changed direction with his army,

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marched across the desert to Bozrah, and captured the city. He slaughtered all the male population, took all their possessions, and set fire to the city. He led his army from that place by night, and they marched toward the stronghold of Dathema. When morning came, they looked ahead and saw a countless multitude of people, with ladders and devices for capturing the stronghold, and beginning to attack the people within. When Judas perceived that the struggle had begun and that the noise of the battle was resounding to heaven with trumpet blasts and loud shouting, he said to the men of his army, "Fight for our kinsmen today." He came up behind them with three columns blowing their trumpets and shouting in prayer. When the army of Timothy realized that it was Maccabeus, they fell back before him, and he inflicted on them a crushing defeat. About eight thousand of their men fell that day. Then he turned toward Alema and attacked and captured it; he killed all the male population, plundered the place, and burned it down. From there he moved on and took Chaspho, Maked, Bosor, and the other cities of Gilead. After these events Timothy assembled another army and camped opposite Raphon, on the other side of the stream. Judas sent men to spy on the camp, and they reported to him: "All the Gentiles around us have rallied to him, making a very large force; they have also hired Arabs to help them, and have camped beyond the stream, ready to attack you." So Judas went forward to attack them. As Judas and his army were approaching the running stream, Timothy said to the officers of his army: "If he crosses over to us first, we shall not be able to resist him; he will certainly defeat us. But if he is afraid and camps on the other side of the river, we will cross over to him and defeat him." But when Judas reached the running stream, he stationed the officers of the people beside the stream and gave them this order: "Do not allow any man to pitch a tent; all must go into battle." He was the first to cross to the attack, with all the people behind him, and the Gentiles were crushed before them; they threw away their arms and fled to the temple enclosure at Carnaim. The Jews captured that city and burnt the enclosure with all who were in it. So Carnaim was subdued, and Judas met with no more resistance.

. The Return to Jerusalem. .

Then he assembled all the Israelites, great and small, who were in Gilead, with their wives and children and their goods, a great crowd of people, to go into the land of Judah. When they reached Ephron, a large and strongly fortified city along the way, they found it impossible to encircle it on either the right or the left; they would have to march right through it. But the men in the city shut them out and blocked up the gates with stones. Then Judas sent them this peaceful message: "We wish to cross your territory in order to reach our own; no one will harm you; we will only march through." But they would not open to him. So Judas ordered a proclamation to be made in the camp that everyone make an attack from the place where he was. When the men of the army took up their positions, he assaulted the city all that day and night, and it was delivered to him. He slaughtered every male, razed and plundered the city, and passed through it over the slain. Then they crossed the Jordan to the great plain in front of Beth-shan; and Judas kept rounding up the stragglers and encouraging the people the whole way, until he reached the land of Judah. They ascended Mount Zion in joy and gladness and offered holocausts, because not one of them had fallen; they had returned in safety.

. Joseph and Azariah Defeated. .

During the time that Judas and Jonathan were in the land of Gilead, and Simon his brother was in Galilee opposite Ptolemais, Joseph, son of Zechariah, and Azariah, the

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leaders of the army, heard about the brave deeds and the fighting that they were doing. They said, "Let us also make a name for ourselves by going out and fighting against the Gentiles around us." They gave orders to the men of their army who were with them, and marched toward Jamnia. But Gorgias and his men came out of the city to meet them in battle. Joseph and Azariah were beaten, and were pursued to the frontiers of Judea, and about two thousand Israelites fell that day. It was a bad defeat for the people, because they had not obeyed Judas and his brothers, thinking that they would do brave deeds. But they did not belong to the family of those men to whom it was granted to achieve Israel's salvation. The valiant Judas and his brothers were greatly renowned in all Israel and among all the Gentiles, wherever their name was heard; and men gathered about them and praised them.

. Success at Hebron and Philistia. .

Then Judas and his brothers went out and attacked the sons of Esau in the country toward the south; he took Hebron and its villages, and he destroyed its strongholds and burned the towers around it. He then set out for the land of the Philistines and passed through Marisa. At that time some priests fell in battle who had gone out rashly to fight in their desire to distinguish themselves. Judas then turned toward Azotus in the land of the Philistines. He destroyed their altars and burned the statues of their idol_gods; and after plundering their cities he returned to the land of Judah.

!! End of The Chapter.

(1 Maccabees 6:1-63 NAB-A) :

. The Last Days of Antiochus Epiphanes. .

As King Antiochus was traversing the inland provinces, he heard that in Persia there was a city called Elymais, famous for its wealth in silver and gold, and that its temple was very rich, containing gold helmets, breastplates, and weapons left there by Alexander, son of Philip, king of Macedon, the first king of the Greeks. He went therefore and tried to capture and pillage the city. But he could not do so, because his plan became known to the people of the city who rose up in battle against him. So he retreated and in great dismay withdrew from there to return to Babylon. While he was in Persia, a messenger brought him news that the armies sent into the land of Judah had been put to flight; that Lysias had gone at first with a strong army and been driven back by the Israelites; that they had grown strong by reason of the arms, men, and abundant possessions taken from the armies they had destroyed; that they had pulled down the Abomination which he had built upon the altar in Jerusalem; and that they had surrounded with high walls both the sanctuary, as it had been before, and his city of Beth-zur. When the king heard this news, he was struck with fear and very much shaken. Sick with grief because his designs had failed, he took to his bed. There he remained many days, overwhelmed with sorrow, for he knew he was going to die. So he called in all his Friends and said to them: "Sleep has departed from my eyes, for my heart is sinking with anxiety. I said to myself: 'Into what tribulation have I come, and in what floods of sorrow am I now! Yet I was kindly and beloved in my rule.' But I now recall the evils I did in Jerusalem, when I carried away all the vessels of gold and silver that were in it, and for no cause gave orders that the

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inhabitants of Judah be destroyed. I know that this is why these evils have overtaken me; and now I am dying, in bitter grief, in a foreign land." Then he summoned Philip, one of his Friends, and put him in charge of his whole kingdom. He gave him his crown, his robe, and his signet ring, so that he might guide the king's son Antiochus and bring him up to be king. King Antiochus died in Persia in the year one hundred and forty-nine. When Lysias learned that the king was dead, he set up the king's son Antiochus, whom he had reared as a child, to be king in his place; and he gave him the title Eupator.

. Renewed Attacks from Syria. .

The men in the citadel were hemming in Israel around the sanctuary, continually trying to harm them and to strengthen the Gentiles. But Judas planned to destroy them, and called all the people together to besiege them. So in the year one hundred and fifty they assembled and stormed the citadel, for which purpose he constructed catapults and other devices. Some of the besieged escaped, joined by impious Israelites; they went to the king and said: "How long will you fail to do justice and avenge our kinsmen? We agreed to serve your father and to follow his orders and obey his edicts. And for this the sons of our people have become our enemies; they have put to death as many of us as they could find and have plundered our estates. They have acted aggressively not only against us, but throughout their whole territory. Look! They have now besieged the citadel in Jerusalem in order to capture it, and they have fortified the sanctuary and Beth-zur. Unless you quickly forestall them, they will do even worse things than these, and you will not be able to stop them." When the king heard this he was angry, and he called together all his Friends, the officers of his army, and the commanders of the cavalry. Mercenary forces also came to him from other kingdoms and from the islands of the seas. His army numbered a hundred thousand foot-soldiers, twenty thousand cavalry, and thirty-two elephants trained for war. They passed through Idumea and camped before Beth-zur. For many days they attacked it; they constructed siege-devices, but the besieged made a sortie and burned these, and they fought bravely.

. The Battle at Beth-zechariah. .

Then Judas marched away from the citadel and moved his camp to Beth-zechariah, on the way to the king's camp. The king, rising before dawn, moved his force hastily along the road to Beth-zechariah; and the armies prepared for battle, while the trumpets sounded. They showed the elephants the juice of grapes and mulberries to provoke them to fight. The beasts were distributed along the phalanxes, each elephant having assigned to it a thousand men in coats of mail, with bronze helmets, and five hundred picked cavalry. These anticipated the beast wherever it was; and wherever it moved, they moved too and never left it. A strong wooden tower covering each elephant, and fastened to it by a harness, held, besides the Indian mahout, three soldiers who fought from it. The remaining cavalry were stationed on one or the other of the two flanks of the army, to harass the enemy and to be protected from the phalanxes. When the sun shone on the gold and bronze shields, the mountains gleamed with their brightness and blazed like flaming torches. Part of the king's army extended over the heights, while some were on low ground, but they marched forward steadily and in good order. All who heard the noise of their numbers, the tramp of their marching, and the clashing of the arms, trembled; for the army was very great and strong. Judas with his army advanced to fight, and six hundred men of the king's army fell. Eleazar, called Avaran, saw one of the beasts bigger than any of the others and covered with royal armor, and he thought the king must be on it. So he gave up his life to save his people and win an everlasting name for

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himself. He dashed up to it in the middle of the phalanx, killing men right and left, so that they fell back from him on both sides. He ran right under the elephant and stabbed it in the belly, killing it. The beast fell to the ground on top of him, and he died there. When the Jews saw the strength of the royal army and the ardor of its forces, they retreated from them.

. The Siege of the Temple. .

A part of the king's army went up to Jerusalem to attack them, and the king established camps in Judea and at Mount Zion. He made peace with the men of Beth-zur, and they evacuated the city, because they had no food there to enable them to stand a siege, for that was a sabbath year in the land. The king took Beth-zur and stationed a garrison there to hold it. For many days he besieged the sanctuary, setting up artillery and machines, fire-throwers, catapults and mechanical bows for shooting arrows and slingstones. The Jews countered by setting up machines of their own, and kept up the fight a long time. But there were no provisions in the storerooms, because it was the seventh year, and the tide-over provisions had been eaten up by those who had been rescued from the Gentiles and brought to Judea. Few men remained in the sanctuary; the rest scattered, each to his own home, for the famine was too much for them.

. Syria Offers Terms. .

Lysias heard that Philip, whom King Antiochus, before his death, had appointed to train his son Antiochus to be king, had returned from Persia and Media with the army that accompanied the king, and that he was seeking to take over the government. So he hastily resolved to withdraw. He said to the king, the leaders of the army, and the soldiers: "We are growing weaker every day, our provisions are scanty, the place we are besieging is strong, and it is our duty to take care of the affairs of the kingdom. Therefore let us now come to terms with these men, and make peace with them and all their nation. Let us grant them freedom to live according to their own Torah as formerly; it was on account of their Torah, which we abolished, that they became angry and did all these things." The proposal found favor with the king and the leaders; he sent peace terms to the Jews, and they accepted. So the king and the leaders swore an oath to them, and on these terms they evacuated the fortification. But when the king entered Mount Zion and saw how the place was fortified, he broke the oath he had sworn and gave orders for the encircling wall to be destroyed. Then he departed in haste and returned to Antioch, where he found Philip in possession of the city. He fought against him and took the city by force.

!! End of The Chapter.

(1 Maccabees 7:1-50 NAB-A) :

. Expedition of Bacchides and Alcimus. .

In the year one hundred and fifty-one, Demetrius, son of Seleucus, set out from Rome, arrived with a few men in a city on the seacoast, and began to rule there. As he was preparing to enter the royal palace of his ancestors, the soldiers seized Antiochus and

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Lysias to bring them to him. When he was informed of this, he said, "Do not show me their faces." So the soldiers killed them, and Demetrius sat on the royal throne. Then all the Torahless and impious men of Israel came to him. They were led by Alcimus, who desired to be high priest. They made this accusation to the king against the people: "Judas and his brothers have destroyed all your friends and have driven us out of our country. So now, send a man whom you trust to go and see all the havoc Judas has done to us and to the king's land, and let him punish them and all their supporters." Then the king chose Bacchides, one of the King's Friends, governor of West-of-Euphrates, a great man in the kingdom, and faithful to the king. He sent him and the impious Alcimus, to whom he granted the high priesthood, with orders to take revenge on the Israelites. They set out and, on arriving in the land of Judah with a great army, sent messengers who spoke deceitfully to Judas and his brothers in peaceful terms. But these paid no attention to their words, seeing that they had come with a great army. A group of scribes, however, gathered about Alcimus and Bacchides to ask for a just agreement. The Hasideans were the first among the Israelites to seek peace with them, for they said, "A priest of the line of Aaron has come with the army, and he will not do us any wrong." He spoke with them peacefully and swore to them, "We will not try to injure you or your friends." So they trusted him. But he arrested sixty of them and killed them in one day, according to the text of Scripture: "The flesh of your holy ones they have strewn, and their blood they have shed round about Jerusalem, and there was no one to bury them." Then fear and dread of them came upon all the people, who said: "There is no truth or justice among them; they violated the agreement and the oath that they swore." Bacchides withdrew from Jerusalem and pitched his camp in Beth-zaiton. He had many of the men arrested who deserted to him, throwing them into the great pit. He handed the province over to Alcimus, leaving troops to help him, while he himself returned to the king. Alcimus spared no pains to maintain his high priesthood, and all those who were disturbing their people gathered about him. They took possession of the land of Judah and caused great distress in Israel. When Judas saw all the evils that Alcimus and his men were bringing upon the Israelites, more than even the Gentiles had done, he went about all the borders of Judea and took revenge on the men who had deserted, preventing them from going out into the country. But when Alcimus saw that Judas and his followers were gaining strength and realized that he could not oppose them, he returned to the king and accused them of grave crimes.

. Nicanor in Judea. .

Then the king sent Nicanor, one of his famous officers, who was a bitter enemy of Israel, with orders to destroy the people. Nicanor came to Jerusalem with a large force and deceitfully sent to Judas and his brothers this peaceable message: "Let there be no fight between me and you. I will come with a few men to meet you peaceably." So he came to Judas, and they greeted one another peaceably. But Judas' enemies were prepared to seize him. When he became aware that Nicanor had come to him with treachery in mind, Judas was afraid and would not meet him again. When Nicanor saw that his plan had been discovered, he went out to fight Judas near Capharsalama. About five hundred men of Nicanor's army fell; the rest fled to the City of David.

. Nicanor Threatens the Temple. .

After this, Nicanor went up to Mount Zion. Some of the priests from the sanctuary and some of the elders of the people came out to greet him peaceably and to show him the holocaust that was being offered for the king. But he mocked and ridiculed them, defiled

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them, and spoke disdainfully. In a rage he swore: "If Judas and his army are not delivered to me at once, when I return victorious I will burn this temple down." He went away in great anger. The priests, however, went in and stood before the altar and the sanctuary. They wept and said: "You have chosen this house to bear your name, to be a house of prayer and petition for your people. Take revenge on this man and his army, and let them fall by the sword. Remember their blasphemies, and do not let them continue."

. The Death of Nicanor. .

Nicanor left Jerusalem and pitched his camp at Beth-horon, where the Syrian army joined him. But Judas camped in Adasa with three thousand men. Here Judas uttered this prayer: "When they who were sent by the king blasphemed, your angel went out and killed a hundred and eighty-five thousand of them. In the same way, crush this army before us today, and let the rest know that Nicanor spoke wickedly against your sanctuary; judge him according to his wickedness." The armies met in battle on the thirteenth day of the month Adar. Nicanor's army was crushed, and he himself was the first to fall in the battle. When his army saw that Nicanor was dead, they threw down their arms and fled. The Jews pursued them a day's journey, from Adasa to near Gazara, blowing the trumpets behind them as signals. From all the surrounding villages of Judea people came out and closed in on them. They hemmed them in, and all the enemies fell by the sword; not a single one escaped. Then the Jews collected the spoils and the booty; they cut off Nicanor's head and his right arm, which he had lifted up so arrogantly. These they brought to Jerusalem and displayed there. The people rejoiced greatly, and observed that day as a great festival. They decreed that it should be observed every year on the thirteenth of Adar. And for a short time the land of Judah was quiet.

!! End of The Chapter.

(1 Maccabees 8:1-32 NAB-A) :

. A Eulogy of the Romans. .

Judas had heard of the reputation of the Romans. They were valiant fighters and acted amiably to all who took their side. They established a friendly alliance with all who applied to them. He was also told of their battles and the brave deeds that they had performed against the Gauls, conquering them and forcing them to pay tribute. They had gotten possession of the silver and gold mines in Spain, and by planning and persistence had conquered the whole country, although it was very remote from their own. They had crushed the kings who had come against them from the far corners of the earth and had inflicted on them severe defeat, and the rest paid tribute to them every year. Philip and Perseus, king of the Macedonians, and the others who opposed them in battle had been overwhelmed and subjugated. Antiochus the Great, king of Asia, who had fought against them with a hundred and twenty elephants and with cavalry and chariots and a very great army, had been defeated by them. They had taken him alive and obliged him and the kings who succeeded him to pay a heavy tribute, to give hostages and a section of Lycia, Mysia, and Lydia from among their best provinces. The Romans took these from him and gave them to King Eumenes. When the men of Greece had planned to come and

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destroy them, the Romans discovered it, and sent against the Greeks a single general who made war on them. Many were wounded and fell, and the Romans took their wives and children captive. They plundered them, took possession of their land, tore down their strongholds and reduced them to slavery even to this day. All the other kingdoms and islands that had ever opposed them they destroyed and enslaved; with their friends, however, and those who relied on them, they maintained friendship. They had conquered kings both far and near, and all who heard of their fame were afraid of them. In truth, those whom they desired to help to a kingdom became kings, and those whom they wished to depose they deposed; and they were greatly exalted. Yet with all this, none of them put on a crown or wore purple as a display of grandeur. They had made for themselves a senate house, and every day three hundred and twenty men took counsel, deliberating on all that concerned the people and their well-being. They entrusted their government to one man every year, to rule over their entire country, and they all obeyed that one, and there was no envy or jealousy among them.

. An Alliance with Rome. .

So Judas chose Eupolemus, son of John, son of Accos, and Jason, son of Eleazar, and sent them to Rome to establish an alliance of friendship with them. He did this to get rid of the yoke, for it was obvious that the kingdom of the Greeks was subjecting Israel to slavery. After making a very long journey to Rome, the envoys entered the senate and spoke as follows: "Judas, called Maccabeus, and his brothers, with the Jewish people, have sent us to you to make a peaceful alliance with you, and to enroll ourselves among your allies and friends." The proposal pleased the Romans, and this is a copy of the reply they inscribed on bronze tablets and sent to Jerusalem, to remain there with the Jews as a record of peace and alliance: "May it be well with the Romans and the Jewish nation at sea and on land forever; may sword and enemy be far from them. But if war is first made on Rome, or any of its allies in any of their dominions, the Jewish nation will help them wholeheartedly, as the occasion shall demand; and to those who wage war they shall not give nor provide grain, arms, money, or ships; this is Rome's decision. They shall fulfill their obligations without receiving any recompense. In the same way, if war is made first on the Jewish nation, the Romans will help them willingly, as the occasion shall demand, and to those who are attacking them there shall not be given grain, arms, money, or ships; this is Rome's decision. They shall fulfill their obligations without deception. On these terms the Romans have made an agreement with the Jewish people. But if both parties hereafter decide to add or take away anything, they shall do as they choose, and whatever they shall add or take away shall be valid. "Moreover, concerning the wrongs that King Demetrius has done to them, we have written to him thus: 'Why have you made your yoke heavy upon our friends and allies the Jews? If they complain about you again, we will do them justice and make war on you by land and sea.'"

!! End of The Chapter.

!! End of Today's FEAST and Related Scriptures! Praise Yah! (HNV-yet version, in the public domain.)